

Great Teen Reads

Joel Shoemaker, Maria Levetzow
ICN Young Adult Books
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Anderson, Laurie Halse. **Chains**. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2008.

Thirteen-year-old Isabel expects to be freed, as promised, following the death of her Mistress in Rhode Island in 1776. Instead she's torn from her younger sister and sold to a wealthy and cruel Loyalist in New York City. Gr. 7+

Aronson, Marc. **Bill Gates: A Twentieth Century Life**. New York: Viking, 2009.

Do you have any readers who want to know how to become rich? Just follow Bill...Gr. 7+ **NF**

Barkley, Brad and Heather Hepler. **Jars of Glass**. New York: Dutton, 2008.

Alternating chapters by Chloe, 14, and her older sister, Shana, relate the pain of their family's increasing dysfunction following their schizophrenic mother's committal to a mental institution. Gr. 7+

Bartoletti, Susan Campbell. **The Boy Who Dared**. New York: Scholastic, 2008.

Helmuth, a gifted and idealistic youngster growing up in Hamburg, Germany during the 1930s, grows increasingly uncomfortable about the untruths he sees being propagated as the Nazis ascend to power. His decision to publish the truth leads to his execution at age seventeen. Gr. 7+

Beaufrand, Mary Jane. **Primavera**. New York: Little, Brown, 2008.

Inspired by Botticelli's painting "Primavera", Beaufrand fictionalizes the Pazzi conspiracy to tell a suspenseful story of Flora Pazzi, the youngest daughter of the Pazzi family, who life is thrown into turmoil by the political machinations of her family. Gr. 7+

Blundell, Judy. **What I Saw and How I Lied**. New York: Scholastic Press, 2008.

Evie, fifteen and innocent, has been content to live below the radar of her mother's radiant beauty. But her family's sudden vacation to Palm Beach in 1947 ends all that in this terrifically suspenseful bildungsroman. Complex enough to satisfy mature YA readers. Gr. 7+

Brooks, Kevin. **Black Rabbit Summer**. New York: Chicken House/Scholastic, 2008.

The CIP fiction subjects are: Missing persons, Friendship, Carnivals, Drug abuse, Homosexuality, England, Mystery and detective stories. All true. Sixteen-year-old Pete, son of a cop, is caught up in a convoluted but compelling Donna Tartt Secret History-like hallucinogenic HS mystery. Open-ending sure to frustrate. Gr. 9+

Busby, Cylin and John. **The Year We Disappeared: a father-daughter memoir**. New York: Bloomsbury, 2008.

John Busby was a cop, a good one, and, as every good cop does, he made enemies. And that resulted in him getting shot in the face and his family being scared for their lives. This is the

account, told in alternating chapters, of the year following John's shooting and what it meant to the family. Gr. 9+ **NF**

Caletti, Deb. **The Fortunes of Indigo Skye**. New York: Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2008.

If you were a waitress and got a 2.5 million dollar tip, would you change jobs? Would you change your friends? Would you change yourself? Gr. 7+

Cashore, Kristin. **Graceling**. Orlando, FL: Harcourt, 2008.

Thanks to her special talent, or "grace," Lady Katsa has been an efficient, if sometimes conflicted, assassin for her uncle, the King. When she meets Po, a foreign prince who is also graced, her life takes a turn. Gr. 9+

Clements, Andrew. **Things That Are**. New York: Philomel, 2008.

Who can you trust? This installment, mostly a romance on hold, is told from Alicia's perspective. This realistic fiction with one fantasy twist continues to satisfy. Gr. 7+

Cocks, Heather and Jessica Morgan. **Go Fug Yourself Presents The Fug Awards**. New York: Simon Spotlight Entertainment, 2008.

If you're a fan of the gofugyourself blog, or just like to mock bad fashion sense, this is the title for you. Gr 10+ **NF**

Colasanti, Susane. **Take Me There**. New York: Viking, 2008.

Rhiannon has just been dumped by Steve. Best friend Nicole has just dumped Danny. Friend James is in the mix, as are Sheila/Brad, Steve/Gloria/Jackson and other fellow students (and teacher Mr. Farrell!) at their Greenwich Village magnet school for art and design. What they call Karmic retribution - we used to just call "revenge". Gr. 9+

Colfer, Eoin. **Airman**. New York: Hyperion Books for Children, 2008.

Conor Broekhart was born in the air. And though his family safely landed, his head stayed in the clouds. He dreamed of building a flying machine. Those dreams are smashed when a traitor kills the king and frames Conor. Years in prison don't squash his love of flying, though, they only fuel his passion for the freedom of the air. Especially when he realizes that flying may be his only way of escape. Gr. 6+

Collins, Suzanne. **Hunger Games**. New York: Scholastic Press, 2008.

Kat, about sixteen, finds herself in the center of a nationally televised reality TV show in which twenty-six teens must fight each other to the death—and the playing field is anything but level. First in a proposed trilogy, will certainly appeal to readers of Paterson's MAXIMUM RIDE, Westerfeld's UGLIES, and Klass's CARETAKER series. Gr. 8+

Coy, John. **Box Out**. New York: Scholastic Press, 2008.

Liam, a sophomore, has been elevated to his high school's varsity basketball team, but feels discomfort at the "optional" Athletic Fellowship meeting's "champion's prayer". This, on top of prayer at the start of the game, prayer at half-time, etc? He's Catholic, comfortable with his faith and how he sees it played out by his grandma (nursing home) and parents, but doesn't think what the coach is doing is right. Gr. 7+

De Alcantara, Pedro. **Backtracked**. New York: Delacorte, 2009.

A privileged slacker born April 3, 1990, Thomas Latrella does not learn about the other lives he'd lived until Feb 28, 2006. The New York City subway becomes the conduit for Tommie's awakening to the history of his city—and his responsibilities as a human being. Gr. 7+

Doctorow, Cory. **Little Brother**. New York: Tor Teen, 2008.

In the aftermath of the bombing of a major bridge in San Francisco, California, seventeen-year-old Marcus and his friends are rounded up, jailed and tortured as terrorist suspects. Finally released into what is now a police state run by the Department of Homeland Security, Marcus uses his expertise in computer hacking to rage against the system. Gr. 8+

Ellis, Deborah. **Lunch with Lenin**. Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 2008.

There's nothing here that is sensationalized, just quiet, thoughtful, disturbing stories about the effects of drugs, including alcohol, on people and cultures around the world. Gr. 7+

Ferguson, Alane. **The Circle of Blood**. New York: Viking, 2008.

Cameryn, assistant to the coroner, is saddened by the death of a young person in her town in a car accident. But she's very surprised when another death occurs the same day - that's very unusual for her small town. But suicide happens everywhere and Cameryn isn't too upset - until she realizes that the victim has connections with her recently-retuned mother, and that she may not have committed suicide after all. Third in the *Forensic Mystery* series. Gr. 7+

Freitas, Donna. **The Possibilities of Sainthood**. New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 2008.

Can Antonia Lucia Labella, 15, become the first living Catholic saint? Only if she convinces the Vatican to endorse her as the Patron Saint of Daddy's Heart or the Patron Saint of the Kiss. Lighthearted but sincere, this combination of romance and religion makes a fun read. Gr. 7+

Fukui, Isamu. **Truancy**. New York: Tor, 2008.

In a world where schools are designed to do nothing but make citizens servile, being a truant is a punishable offense. And when the truants start fighting back, the stage is set for a bloody battle. Gr. 8+

Gaiman, Neil. **The Graveyard Book**. New York: HarperCollins, 2008.

Taken in as a toddler and raised by ghostly inhabitants of a neighborhood cemetery following the vicious murder of his family, Bod grows and learns in this tale that is in turn scary, whimsical, quixotic, and tender.

Gould, Peter. **Write Naked**. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2008.

Victor acquires an old typewriter at a yard sale and takes it to his uncle's cabin in the Vermont woods to test the idea that "You have to be naked to write." When he sees Rose Anna, watching him through the window, they begin a tender and careful exploration of each other and their ideas. Gr. 8+

Green, John. **Paper Towns**. New York: Dutton, 2008.

At midnight a month before their high school graduation, Q is roused from his comfortable torpor by Margo Roth Spiegelman, his next door neighbor and longtime unrequited love—or lust. She enlists him in wreaking hilarious havoc on former friends who've wronged her. Then things get interesting. Gr. 9+.

Halam, Ann. **Snakehead**. New York: Wendy Lamb Books, 2008.

In Greek legend, Perseus destroyed the Medusa and turned his mother's unwanted suitor to stone. According to Halam, he's also one half of the only couple in Greek mythology to live happily ever after. This is Halam's account of how that might have happened. Gr. 9+

Halpin, Brenda. **Forever Changes**. New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 2008.

Brianna has cystic fibrosis. As a math genius, it's not hard for her to figure out the future that everyone envisions for her at MIT is not in the numbers. But then she learns a new kind of math, one that allows for infinitesimal possibilities. Gr. 7+

Hardy, Mark. **Nothing Pink**. Asheville, NC: Front Street, 2008.

Vincent knows deep down that he is gay, and though he has never acted on his feelings in any way, he knows his father, a Southern Baptist minister who, as the book opens, is preaching his first sermon in a new church, could never condone this. Gr. 8+

Jaffe, Michele. **Kitty Kitty**. New York: HarperTeen, 2008.

Jasmine is back in this sequel to **Bad Kitty**, and this time she's in Italy with her family. Despite the fact that she's been torn away from her friends and new boyfriend, she's determined to be the ideal daughter. Definitely *not* the kind of daughter who has run-ins with police while trying to solve the mystery of her only friend in Italy's supposed suicide. Gr. 7+

Jinks, Catherine. **Genius Squad**. Orlando: Harcourt, 2008.

Cadel Piggott is now living in a foster home, hiding away from Prosper English, the man that claimed to be his father but trained Cadel to use his considerable mental talents for evil. Cadel knows that it's just a matter of time before Prosper uses his contacts to threaten Cadel, so he joins up with Trader and a group of renegade teen geniuses to shut down an organization that has ties to English. Gr. 7+

Johnson, Maureen. **Suite Scarlett**. New York: Point, 2008.

Scarlett's family owns and lives in the Hopewell, a once-glamorous, but now somewhat run-down hotel. On Scarlett's 15th birthday, she's given a key to one of the rooms. With it goes the responsibility to take care of any guests that might use that room. Little does anyone know that the first guest in Scarlett's room will stand the Hopewell on its head. Gr. 7+

Klass, David. **Whirlwind**. New York: Farrar, Straus Giroux, 2008.

This second installment of the "Caretaker Trilogy" finds young Jack arriving home to discover he's being blamed for the death of his parents and suspected in the disappearance of PJ, his girlfriend. Nonstop action propels Jack and Gisco into the Amazonian jungles to rescue PJ and once again avert ecological disaster, leaving several threads of the story open for the final episode. Gr. 7+

Kuklin, Susan. **No Choirboy : murder, violence, and teenagers on death row**. New York: Henry Holt, 2008.

Interviews and support materials from trial records, emails with family members of both victims and survivors, etc. make the case against the death penalty for youths sentenced to death for murders committed when they were teens. Gr. 9+

Lanagan, Margo. **Tender Morsels**. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2008.

Liga lives a life of unbelievable deprivation, abused first by her father, then by boys from the village. Her desperate wish for a safe place to live inspires the natural magic of where she lives to form her own personal heaven, where she lives with her two daughters. But when a hedge witch breaches the boundaries between the worlds, Liga's heaven starts to fall apart. Gr. 10+ 2009 **Printz Honor Book**.

Lecesne, James. **Absolute Brightness**. New York: HarperTeen, 2008.

Phoebe is stunned when her mother announces, in the frozen food aisle, that a cousin they didn't even know about is coming to live with them. She's even more stunned when openly gay Leonard moves in and starts making over their mother and every other woman who comes in to their beauty salon. He never makes Phoebe over, which she's perfectly happy about, given that he's nothing but an annoyance. When he goes missing, she realizes that he's become much more to her than an annoying cousin, and that realization is the first of several that turn her world upside-down. Gr. 8+

Levine, Gail Carson. **Ever**. New York: HarperCollins, 2008.

Kezi's father makes a vow to his god to take the life of the first person who congratulates him on his wife's recovery. Unfortunately, that person ends up being Kezi. Can Olus, gods of the winds, find a way to make her immortal? And, if he does, will that anger the god that Kezi's father made his vow to? Gr. 6+

Lockhart, E. **The Disreputable History of Frankie Landau-Banks**. New York: Hyperion, 2008.

Frankie Landau-Banks might be a criminal mastermind. But Frankie's boyfriend is in a secret society that won't even let her in just because she's a girl. How else can Frankie prove herself than by secretly hijacking the secret society and using them to mastermind brilliant pranks? Gr. 7+ **2009 Printz Honor Book**.

Lupica, Mike. **The Big Field**. New York: Puffin, 2009.

The author's winning formula tells of fourteen-year-old Hutch's conflicts on the baseball field with a talented new player who takes "his" position—shortstop—and widens the rift with his father, a former player who refuses to help his son at all as they move toward the championship. Gr. 6-9

Marchetta, Melina. **Jellicoe Road**. New York: Harpertime, 2008.

Abandoned by her drug-addicted mother at the age of eleven, high school student Taylor Markham struggles with her identity and family history at a boarding school in Australia. Gr. 9+ **2009 Printz Winner**.

Marillier, Juliet. **Cybele's Secret**. New York: Knopf, 2008.

Paula, the scholarly member of the family from Wildwood Dancing, sets out on her own adventure to Istanbul, as her father's trading assistant. Her adventure goes beyond the borders of Istanbul, though, as her sister Tati, lost to the Other Kingdom, appears and draws Paula into a quest that will either richly reward or possibly destroy Paula and all she holds dear. Gr. 7+

Mebus, Scott. **Gods of Manhattan**. New York: Dutton Children's Books, 2008.

Babe Ruth, Alexander Hamilton, Walt Whitman - they're not really dead. Sure they died, but

then they came back to life as gods of Manhattan. All of the large historical figures of New York City have become gods, and they still keep the city running. You can see them if you have a special talent, and Rory Hennessy has it. Problem is, not everyone wants Rory to be able to see Mannahatta, the spirit city, and they're prepared to stop him, even if it means killing him. Just like they've been killing the gods of Manahatta, which isn't even supposed to be possible. Gr. 6-9

Meldrum, Christina. **Madapple**. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2008.

A dark, atmospheric and philosophical religious/botanical family secrets run amok mystery! Auslaug, 16, homeschooled on a small holding in Maine by her harsh single mom, Danish immigrant Marin, finds herself on trial for murder. Gr. 9+

Mortensen, Greg and David Oliver Relin. **Three Cups of Tea**. New York: Penguin, 2008.

Also three books: *Listen to the Wind*, (picture book) a YA and an adult version as titles above. Mountain climber turned school-builder in Pakistan and Afghanistan, this is a truly inspirational story still being played out in today's headlines—or unfortunately typically, the back pages.

Myers, Walter Dean. **Game**. New York: HarperTeen, 2009.

Drew's senior basketball season is critical if he hopes to play his way out of Harlem and into a D-1 school. A serious guy, respectful of his parents and sister and even teachers at school, he's benched and has to play his way back onto the court. The basketball action is detailed, while subplots show the knife edge that separates success from failure. Gr. 7+ (BL 8-12; Kirkus 11+; SLJ 9+)

Myers, Walter Dean. **Sunrise Over Fallujah**. New York: Scholastic Press, 2008.

Remember Richie, from *Fallen Angels* (1988)? His nephew, Robin becomes part of Operation Iraqi Freedom as a member of a civil affairs unit, quickly learning that the more things change,... Gr. 8+

Our White House: Looking In Looking Out. Cambridge, MA: Candlewick, 2008.

Vignettes chronologically describe the design, building, rebuilding and life in our Presidents' official residence. Unexpectedly fun! Extra bits (the press corps, the Easter Egg Roll, Presidential ghosts, pets, etc) and many full-page color illustrations enliven the text. Gr. 7+ **NF**

Pearson, Mary E. **The Adoration of Jenna Fox**. New York: Henry Holt, 2008.

Jenna has just awoken from an 18-month coma. Her parents have moved her to a new home, one that's remote and peaceful, to help her heal. But as she heals, she starts to wonder more and more about her life before the accident. She doesn't remember it at all, at first. As her memories slowly come back, new questions come with them -- questions that no one wants to answer. Gr. 8-12

Plum-Ucci, Carol. **Streams of Babel**. Orlando, FL: Harcourt, 2008.

Bio-terrorists have threatened the water supply of an unnamed town, possibly close to New York City. The authorities have tested the water of all towns within three hours, and have come up with nothing. But Shahzad, a sixteen-year-old computer genius in Pakistan who's virtual spying led to the testing, is sure that New York City is Colony 1 and the terrorists have planned something awful. Gr. 9+

Pratchett, Terry. **Nation**. New York: HarperTeen, 2008.

Mau is returning to the Nation after completing the month-long ritual that allows him to enter manhood. As he canoes back to his people, a wave larger than anything seen before washes him home. It also destroys the Nation and Mau is left to return their bodies to the sea. He considers following them, but lives to save the "ghost girl" whose ship also was brought aground by the giant wave. Gr. 7+ **2009 Printz Honor Book**.

Reisman, Michael. **The Gravity Keeper**. New York: Dutton Children's Books, 2008.

Simon Bloom finds a book, *The Teacher's Guide to Physics*. Or does it find him? For this is no ordinary book, it actually controls the laws of physics. And whoever controls the books, controls the laws. Gr. 6-9

Rhodes-Courter, Ashley. **Three Little Words: a Memoir**. New York: Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2008.

Wrenchingly painful memories of a girl lost in Florida's foster care system, whose pluck eventually led to the conviction of certain individuals and an overhaul of the state's tracking system. Gr. 8+

*Russell, P. Craig. **Coraline**. New York: HarperCollins, 2008.

The graphic novel adaptation of Neil Gaiman's original spooky story shows the continuing experimentation going on in this part of YA publishing. Successful if you don't mind seeing someone else's vision of the story you first saw in your head. Gr. 6+

Schumacher, Julie **Blackbox**. New York: Delacorte Press, 2008.

Elena and her sister have always been close. So when Dora is admitted to a hospital due to her depression, she asks Elena to save her. But Elena doesn't know how; she's not even sure she can take care of herself in these overwhelming circumstances. Gr. 7+

Scott, Elizabeth. **Stealing Heaven**. New York: HarperTeen, 2008.

Dani has spent her whole life training for the career her mother chose - that of a thief. She knows all the tricks and can get away with a haul of silver that will make enough money to live on for months. But Dani can't buy what she wants with silver. Gr. 7+

Shoup, Barbara. **Everything You Want**. Woodbury, MN: Flux/Llewellyn Publications, 2008.

Somewhat earnest navel-gazing by Emma, 18, a college freshman at Indiana University in Bloomington whose life turns upside down when her father, whose casual cursing, btw, is a constant, wins \$50 million in the lottery. The languid introspection eventually leads to that lesson the Beatles sang about... Gr. 9+ (See also Caletti, Deb. **Fortunes of Indigo Skye**. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2008. Same sort of plot, money angst, and theme/resolution. Also Gr. 9+.)

Singer, Nicky. **Gem X**. New York: Holiday House, 2008.

Maxo is a GemX genotype: genetically manipulated to be physically perfect. One day, he wakes up and finds a crack on his face. Research shows that it's called a "wrinkle". He's only sixteen! His search for a 'cure' brings him into contact with Dreggies, people who have not been genetically enhanced, and Maxo begins to realize the huge price that has been paid for the genetic enhancements that his society are so proud of. Gr. 7+

*Sturm, James and Rich Tommaso. **Satchel Paige: Striking Out Jim Crow**. New York: Hyperion, 2007.

A graphic novel account of the career of Negro League pitcher Satchel Paige, discussing the show he put on as a popular player, as well as the respect he demanded as an African-American. Gr. 8+

Tan, Shaun. **Tales from Outer Suburbia**. New York: Arthur A. Levine Books, 2009.

REALLY short stories fabulously illustrated by the author are in turn enigmatic, whimsical, poignant, mesmerizing and provocative. As in the author's debut wordless picture book *The Arrival*, here we find the juxtaposition of ordinary people and extraordinary landscapes, often dominated or obscured by mechanistic/industrial elements. Gr.7+

Uehashi, Nahoko. **Guardian of the Spirit**. New York: Arthur A. Levine Books, 2008.

Balsa protects people in an effort to pay her cosmic dues for other lives lost for her sake. But saving the life of the young crown prince finds her fighting battles on two fronts, this world and another one whose denizens are also battling for the life of the child and what is growing inside him. Gr. 6-9

Venkatraman, Padma. **Climbing the Stairs**. New York: Putnams, 2008.

Vidya is 15 and wants to go to college. But in British-occupied India during WWII, that's not likely. Especially after her father, who espouses Gandhi's non-violent civil disobedience, is injured in a protest and is left with severe mental damage. Vidya and her family have to go live with family members who have much more traditional views of the proper role of a woman. Gr. 6+

Wallace, Rich. **Perpetual Check**. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2009.

A weekend chess tournament in Scranton, PA, pits aggressive high school senior Zeke, a multi-sport athlete, against his brother, Randy, a pudgy freshman who has been beating Zeke nine times out of ten. Must one of them lose? Gr. 7+

Werlin, Nancy. **Impossible**. New York: Dial Books, 2008. Gr. 8+

Lucy finds out that a little known version of the folk song Scarborough Fair actually details her family's generations-old battle with a curse placed by an Elfin Knight. And now it's her turn to be destroyed by the curse, unless she can make a shirt with no needle or seam, find land between the salt water and the sea strand, and then sow it with one grain of corn.

Yancey, Rick. **Alfred Kropp: The Thirteenth Skull**. New York: Bloomsbury, 2008.

Did anyone miss the first two books (**The Extraordinary Adventures of Alfred Kropp** and **Alfred Kropp: The Seal of Solomon**) besides me? Continues the adventures of reluctant hero, Alfred, 16, who finds that as the last direct descendant of Lancelot (yep, of the Round Table) he has not only the opportunity but the wherewithal to save the world—again. As the Boolist review so penchantly states, "Eat your heart out, Alex Rider; Alfred Kropp is back in town." Gr. 7+

Wasserman, Robin. **Skinned**. New York: Simon Pulse, 2008.

Lia was in a terrible car accident; it was so bad, she should be dead. And some say she is. Some say that copying her thoughts and memories to a computer and replacing her body with robotics, no matter how realistic, means that Lia is no longer human. Gr. 8+

Watkins, Steve. **Down Sand Mountain.** Cambridge, MA: Candlewick Press, 2008.

Things are not tranquil along the Peace River as a bewildered Dewey starts seventh grade in Sand Mountain, FL, in 1966. Racial issues simmer beneath the surface, as the war in Vietnam, sexual and social issues add weight to this powerful coming-of-age gumbo. Gr. 7+

Woodson, Jacqueline. **After Tupac and D Foster.** New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 2008.

An unnamed female protagonist finds context in Tupac's lyrics, life and death, describing the incremental changes she and best friend Neeka experience as they get to know D Foster, a new girl at school who has bounced from one foster family to another all her life and they make that extraordinary transition from being 12 years old to thirteen. Gr. 7+

Wright, Bil. **When the Black Girl Sings.** New York: Simon & Schuster, 2008.

As the only black student in her exclusive private Connecticut prep school, Lahni faces enough trouble before her parents, who are white, begin to talk about divorce. When her music teacher challenges her to enter a singing competition, the pressures intensify. Gr. 7+

* indicates graphic novels